



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Western Region

90 Seventh St.
Suite 10-100
San Francisco, CA
94103

October 16, 2018

The Honorable Ralph D.G. Torres
Office of the Governor
Commonwealth of The Northern Mariana Islands
Call BOX 10007
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Torres:

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approves the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (DCCA) to operate the Emergency Food Assistance for Victims of Disaster pursuant to Part XI and Exhibit D of the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) manual of operation due to impacts from the Typhoon Mangkhut that occurred on September 10-11, 2018. For the purpose of this approval, we will refer to the program as the Disaster NAP (D-NAP). President Donald J. Trump issued a major disaster declaration designating the CNMI Islands of Rota, Saipan, and Tinian as eligible for Federal individual assistance on September 29, 2018.

Conditions of approval and the CNMI DCCA's proposed procedures are described in further detail below:

Disaster Area

Per your request, CNMI DCCA will operate D-NAP to serve households that resided and/ or worked in Rota, on September 9, 2018.

Application Period and Sites

CNMI DCCA will accept D-NAP applications for 5 consecutive days, beginning on October 22 through October 26, 2018. CNMI must advise FNS if it changes the start date prior to beginning D-NAP Operations.

CNMI DCCA will operate at Rota Youth Center located in Sinapalo, Rota, from 8:00am – 6:00pm.

CNMI DCCA must ensure that all public communication and press materials provide clear, accurate, and updated information about site location and hours of operation. CNMI DCCA must also ensure that the site has human comforts (such as water, restrooms facilities, etc.), reasonable accommodations for the elderly and disabled, and sufficient security.

CNMI DCCA will follow alternate procedures for applicants who have been displaced from Rota due to home loss, mandatory evacuation, medical emergency, etc., but lived there on September 9, 2018. Such applicants may visit the CNMI NAP office (located in As Lito) in Saipan or the DCCA office at the San Jose Public Gymnasium in Tinian, where they are temporarily residing to apply for disaster

assistance and will be subject to the same application period, October 22 through October 26, 2018.

Benefit (or Disaster) Period

CNMI DCCA will determine eligibility based on a household's income, resources, disaster-related expenses, and other circumstances between September 9 and October 8, 2018.

CNMI DCCA will certify eligible households for 1 month, and issue the maximum allotment based on household size according to Exhibits C and D of the CNMI NAP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for federal fiscal year 2018, included in your request letter as Table 3.

Eligibility

- Only households that resided and/or worked in Rota on September 9, 2018, are eligible for D-NAP.
- Household composition as it existed on September 9, 2018, will be used in determining D-NAP eligibility.
- Household that experienced food loss alone as their only disaster-related expense may be eligible for D-NAP.
- Household that experienced a reduction or termination of income as a direct result of the disaster may be eligible for D-NAP.
- CNMI DCCA will adhere to the verification requirements included in the request letter for the D-NAP, which include mandatory verification of identity; verification of residency and loss of income or inaccessibility of resources, where possible; and verification of household composition and food loss, if questionable. In the event that the household does not have the documentation to provide proof of identity, residency, income/resources, etc., an affidavit will be used to declare such information. Certain verification requirements may be waived.

Ongoing Households

Disaster supplements provide for equity in disaster assistance between new D-NAP households and ongoing NAP households, as supplements bring the benefits of ongoing NAP households up to the maximum allotment for their household size.

Ongoing households that lived and/or worked in Rota may request disaster supplements on an individual basis by completing a Disaster Application Form for the record-keeping purposes required under Exhibit D, IV(B)1 of the NAP Manual of Operations.

Ongoing NAP households already receiving the maximum monthly allotment are not eligible for disaster supplements.

NAP Coupon Issuance and Funding Source

CNMI DCCA maintains that it has a sufficient supply of NAP coupons to issue to all anticipated D-NAP applicants, and will carefully monitor the supply of coupons and

the number of applications received and processed each day in order to arrange for the production and delivery of additional coupons should their estimate of applicant households prove too low. CNMI DCCA will notify FNS immediately should difficulties arise with coupon stock volume or production. Coupons used for the D-NAP and supplements will be effective through December 31, 2018.

CNMI DCCA has requested to target D-NAP operations in Rota and estimated that up to 643 new households may be eligible for to apply for D-NAP with a projected issuance of \$379,370, and that up to 103 ongoing NAP households may be eligible for disaster supplements with a projected issuance of \$17,725. The estimated total cost for disaster benefits is \$397,095.

CNMI DCCA is also requesting an estimated \$40,501.69 of administrative expenses associated with the operations of the D-NAP. CNMI DCCA must use approved fiscal year 2018 CNMI NAP MOU funding for the D-NAP.

Local Coupons

FNS approves CNMI DCCA's request to lift the local coupons restriction and allow the local coupons to be used to purchase imported eligible foods through December 31, 2018. This flexibility only applies to Rota and to eligible resident applicants who were displaced from Rota due to home loss, evacuation and medical emergency (as a result of the storm), etc. Eligible residents will be provided individually, per household, a written authorization allowing these items for purchase with disaster or supplemental benefits on Saipan and Tinian.

Hot Foods

FNS approves CNMI DCCA's request to allow NAP and D-NAP households the ability to purchase hot foods and hot food items for immediate consumption with NAP benefits through December 31, 2018.

Program Integrity

CNMI DCCA will conduct a duplicate participation check against the existing NAP caseload and against D-NAP applications before authorizing benefits.

CNMI DCCA may take up to 7 days to process D-NAP applications when application information presented by a household is questionable.

CNMI DCCA must conduct anti-fraud efforts and warn households of the consequences of committing fraud through notices and prominent signage at all application sites.

CNMI DCCA will review 0.5% of D-NAP cases (no fewer than 25 cases but no more than 500 cases) to ensure D-NAP eligibility and allotments were correctly determined.

CNMI DCCA will review 100% of all applications from CNMI NAP employees who apply for D-NAP benefits. Results of the integrity review must be submitted to FNS within 6 months of the close of the application period.

Reporting

CNMI DCCA will submit daily reports to FNS with the following information:

- The number of new households and persons approved for D-NAP.
- The number of new households denied for D-NAP.
- The number of ongoing NAP households and persons approved for disaster supplements.
- The value of D-NAP benefits and disaster supplements issued.
- The average issuance amount per household.

The State agency will submit an FNS-388, FNS 388A, and SF425/FNS 778 in the Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) in accordance with the listed due dates.

CNMI DCCA will submit a comprehensive Post-Disaster Report to the FNS Western Regional Office no later than 6 months after the close of operations. This report will include individual case reviews, problem analysis, and proposed improvements to the Commonwealth's D-NAP plan.

Thank you for your continuous dedication to the people of CNMI. If you have any questions, please contact Maribelle Balbes of my staff at 415-437-8802 or by email at Maribelle.Balbes@fns.usda.gov.

Sincerely,



Jesus Mendoza Jr.
Regional Administrator
Western Region

cc: Robert Hunter, CNMI DCCA
Walter Macaranas, CNMI DCCA
Rebecca Hobbs, FNS WRO
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